



MEDIA RELEASE

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Owners of upstate physical therapy centers named 2007 SBA Small Business Persons of the Year for South Carolina

GREER, GREENVILLE – Amanda Somers, Darlene Pope and Lance Owens of Sports Spine & Industrial (SSI), a Greer-based physical therapy and wellness company, are the 2007 SBA South Carolina Small Business Persons of the Year.

Somers, company president, founded SSI in 2002 in Greer as a private physical therapy clinic; the company became profitable within two months. Nine months later, SSI expanded to a second location, managed by future partner Darlene Pope, in Simpsonville. In March 2003, Pope and Owens purchased 66 2/3 percent of the company stock and three became equal shareholders, creating the partnership that owns and operates SSI today. Most recently, SSI opened a facility in Greenville.

In 2004, just two years after opening, SSI launched a \$2 million expansion of its Greer facility to expand its services beyond traditional therapy and build a facility for the entire community to improve public health. The result was the Performance Training and Wellness Center, a medically oriented gym, which features wellness coaches for those wishing to make lifestyle changes. The center also offers programs for advanced athletes and hosts the community's youth athletic programs. Staff members present educational programs to local community centers and churches, and they work with athletes and coaches on injury prevention education. The 12,000 foot facility has over 800 active members.

Somers earned her Bachelor of Science in Physical Therapy from the Medical University of South Carolina in 1993. An active member of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA), she is involved in lobbying efforts for the physical therapy field and serves as APTA South Carolina chapter's representative to the APTA national board, the House of Delegates. Somers is currently Chair of the Greater Greer Chamber of Commerce.

Owens holds a Masters in Sports Medicine from the United States Sports Academy in Mobile, Alabama; a Bachelor of Science in Physical Therapy from the Medical University of South Carolina; and a Master's of Business Administration from Webster University. In addition to his membership in APTA and the National Athletic Trainers Association (NATA), Owens is Medical Director of the BMW Charity Pro-Am Golf Tournament.

Pope has a Bachelor of Science in Physical Therapy from East Carolina University and is certified as a Clinical Specialist in Orthopedic Physical Therapy. In 2004, she was appointed by Governor Mark Sanford to the South Carolina Physical Therapy Licensing Board. In addition to being an active member of the APTA South Carolina chapter, Pope is Secretary of the Simpsonville Chamber of Commerce.

The SBA South Carolina District Office is holding the awards ceremony at the Salute to Small Business on Wednesday, April 11 at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center. Please call Susan Chavis at (803) 765-5373 for more information.

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